



# In'terview

**By Warren Gerds**

Press-Gazette Staff Writer

**To Clayton Toonen, director of WGBP, Premontre High School's radio station (90.1 on the FM dial) — Why does Premontre have a station?**

"It started with the students coming to us about three years ago saying that they had heard about another station, at Sheboygan North, and they thought it was pretty cool. They thought about the possibility of getting one," Toonen says.

Dennis Ledvina of the faculty, who also holds the essential first-class broadcast license, looked into the technical aspects while Toonen checked out procedural matters involving federal licensing, and "we found out we could do it. But it took a lot of monkeying around. We had to submit a lot of papers to the Federal Communications Commission (which approves licenses).

"We decided that it would be educationally profitable for the kids. It's another chance for them to be creative. They create the programs, they study for their licenses, they do the announcing. Really, it's pretty well handled by the students."

The station operates from noon to 4 p.m. on weekdays, and it also broadcasts the school's football and basketball games live. It is a small-power station, with but 10 watts, and it reaches 10 miles.

WGPB went on the air last March with a two-hour-a-day schedule, and it expanded that to four hours this fall.



**CLAYTON TOONEN**

**How many students are involved?**

"For the present semester, we have 11 licensed announcers plus 35 to 40 students who are station workers. About 25 of these are in the journalism class, and we run the class in conjunction with the station. The other ones are about 10 to 15 boys who during their free periods go to the station and do whatever has to be done — type up logs, or gather some news or get on the telephone and do whatever has to be done before the announcers get on the air."

School-produced programs include dramatizations of historical events, interviews with local officials and personalities and interviews with teachers on new trends or developments in teaching. There are also news, sports, weather and community calendar segments and programs featuring easy listening and rock music.

**Isn't it expensive to have a station?**

"The original investment to get the equipment was in excess of \$5,000 to get just the essentials to get on the air. The school sponsored that. The maintenance isn't all that expensive, except for the live broadcasts."

**What are the key problems of the station?**

"One of them has to do with meshing your broadcast schedule with the free time of the students. As it works out now, if they're in journalism class I can release them to announce because, after all, it's an arm of communication. But if their free period doesn't mesh with the radio schedule, then there's sometimes an awful lot of juggling going on.

"I hope we get more announcers to help overcome this, but it's a very difficult test, and quite frankly, ... one element of the test is very technical, and there's a pretty high (about 50 per cent) failure rate on it."

**Toonen says there are only four high school radio stations in the state. To have one must be a mark of prestige.**

"I think you'd have to say that. We get phone calls from other schools who ask, 'How do you go about getting a station?' I say, 'First of all you need somebody with a first-class broadcasting license,' and that stops some of them right away because there aren't all that many people walking around with that kind of license. Also, it took us a good three years before we got to throw the switch."



**Premontre Dee Jay** — Mark Waselchuk gives a record a spin in preparation for today's first

day of operation for Premontre High School's FM radio station, WGBP. (Press-Gazette Photo)